



H.R. 3658 – To amend the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to permit rest and recuperation travel to United States territories for members of the Foreign Service

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 3658 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Luis Fortuno (R-PR) on September 25, 2007. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed to the bill by unanimous consent on April 30, 2008.

H.R. 3658 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on May 5, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3658 allows U.S. Foreign Service officers stationed in overseas posts to take government funded rest and recuperation travels to U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Marina Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

BACKGROUND

H.R. 3658 amends the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-465), which allows U.S. Foreign Service officers to take rest and recuperation travel from military posts overseas. These breaks are funded by the State Department, and travel must be to locations either within the U.S. or other approved destinations abroad. Currently, travel is not allowed to U.S. territories as current law does not interpret these destinations as being within the U.S. nor abroad.

The law states that the State Department will provide the travel expenses for one round trip of a Foreign Service member and the member's family during the member's continuous two year tour abroad unbroken by home leave. The State Department will provide travel expenses for two round trips after three years of service abroad unbroken by home leave.

Today, there are about 13,000 Foreign Service Officers and Specialists, with roughly two-thirds of them serving abroad at over 250 posts and missions at any time. The Foreign Services Act of 1980 serves as the body of law providing authority to the current U.S. Foreign Services system.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office did not have a cost estimate available for H.R. 3658 as of May 4, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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